

## Principal's Managerial Leadership in Improving School Quality in Senior High Schools

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**Abstract:** The principal is a critical factor in the school's quality and plays a significant role as a leader. A principal must possess managerial skills to lead and manage an educational institution effectively. The impetus for this study is the necessity to enhance the quality of the school. This study, therefore, aims to ascertain the extent to which the principal's managerial leadership contributes to improving the school's quality. This qualitative research employed a qualitative descriptive method. Interviews, documentation, and observations were implemented as data collection techniques. The Principal, Vice Principal for Public Relations, Vice Principal for Curriculum, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, Vice Principal for Al-Islam, Muhammadiyah, and Arabic (ISMUBA), and Vice Principal for Infrastructure were all participants in this study. Using guidelines on source and technical triangulation, data analysis was then carried out using qualitative descriptive techniques. The results of this study revealed that to effectively lead the school in enhancing its quality, a principal must possess managerial leadership skills: 1) conceptual skills, 2) humanitarian skills, and 3) technical skills.

**Keywords:** Managerial; Managerial leadership; Principal; School quality; Humanitarian skills; Conceptual skills.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is an endeavor to foster and enrich the human personality physically and spiritually (Ali & Hasanah, 2021). Education is also a way to develop students' abilities, enabling them to adjust to their surroundings. Leadership is a way of influencing all group activities that are organized in order to achieve goals (Ummah, 2019); in this case, the principal of an educational unit is a professional education staff member who is fully authorized and accountable for conducting academic and managerial coaching in schools (Abinnashih & Nurfuadi, 2023).

A leader has the responsibility to provide training to the group to be aware of the process and content of the work carried out and dare to assess the results of their work objectively and honestly (Endah Irawati, Dimas Hendra

Kusuma, 2022). Principals also have duties and responsibilities in the learning process. In learning, principals have the task of determining school goals, developing and encouraging students' expectations for success, determining and encouraging high academic benchmarks, assessing and monitoring the placement of students, coordinating the curriculum, and maintaining the quality of teaching time (Endah Irawati, Dimas Hendra Kusuma, 2022).

Consequently, the teaching and learning process in schools can be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the attainment of effective and efficient learning objectives. In most institutions or organizations, the challenges of managerial leadership are frequently discussed, including the absence or lack of motivation from the leadership (Atasoy, 2020). Managerial leadership assumes that leadership should be focused on tasks, functions, and behavior. The organization will provide facilities for individual tasks if the functions are entirely done (Afif Abdurrohman & Hidayati, 2024). Managerial leadership is the ability of school principals to carry out self-management and work environment based on their skills (Kustian et al., 2018).

The principal's managerial ability is defined as the capacity to plan, implement, control, and evaluate programs in the management of educational institutions with effective management. This capacity encompasses planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (Darwansah et al., 2021). Developing and improving these educators is one of the indicators of the principal's managerial ability. The principal's performance indicators demonstrate that the principal is not practical in executing managerial functions, which is indicative of the results of their supervision (Khotami, 2020). For the leadership that is implemented to be efficient and effective, one of the responsibilities that a leader must carry out is to make the implemented management run correctly and well, namely providing satisfaction to the individuals he leads. To enhance performance, the principal must also be able to compile school programs tailored to the school's potential in resource management and organizational development. This will ensure that educators can fulfill their responsibilities effectively and achieve goals. Nevertheless, the reality reveals that some principals lack managerial proficiency, which hinders their ability to advance their schools. Principals do not yet possess the managerial abilities necessary to establish educational institutions. Additionally, some principals, specifically in Yogyakarta, have not fully implemented the expected managerial responsibilities.

The managerial abilities of principals were still found to be low. The principal is accountable for ensuring that the regulations in effect at the school are adhered to and that the administrative staff, students, and instructors are motivated to do so (Tonich, 2021). Through good educational institutions, graduates who are capable of applying the knowledge they have acquired or

learned during the educational process and can revolutionize their character and mentality will be born. In the regulations of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, it is stated that every educational unit on formal and non-formal paths is required to carry out quality assurance of education that aims to meet and exceed national standards, which are conducted in stages, systematically, and planned in a quality assurance program with clear targets and time frames]. Suppose the principal and school personnel do not manage and maintain the facilities and infrastructure. In that case, everything will be in vain, even though the facilities and infrastructure owned are sophisticated and magnificent. In this sense, the managerial policies of the principal are effectively able to improve teacher performance, which indirectly can guarantee the quality of the school in learning. Consequently, it is imperative to research the managerial leadership traits of a principal to enhance the organization and development of the school under his leadership. The formulation of the problem in this study is how the principal carried out the managerial leadership in improving the quality of schools in Yogyakarta Senior High Schools.

State-of-the-art research on the role of teachers in education is important for improving the quality of schools, so their existence is important for maintaining their quality in terms of teaching, professionalism, and welfare. Several previous studies found that teacher welfare can influence school quality. There is still not much research on Teacher Welfare, especially from the teacher's perspective. So, more in-depth research is needed regarding teacher welfare from the teacher's perspective.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to undertake this study. Qualitative descriptive research is research conducted to describe the phenomena that occur and research variables systematically and factually based on the events obtained. This study offers a comprehensive overview and analysis of how the principal carried out managerial leadership to improve school quality. The research was conducted at SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Yogyakarta, which was chosen due to its exceptional quality. The school's principal and all vice principals served as the data sources for this study. This research implemented interviews, documentation, and observation as data collection techniques. An interaction analysis model was used to process data, including data collection, reduction, presentation, and conclusions.

Before the interview, the authors observed the object being studied. The authors observed the principal's managerial activities, and they would later be the subject of inquiries during the interview. The interview was a question-and-answer session involving a conversation between the researchers and the

principal and vice principal team. The interview was transcribed and documented using written notes, audio recordings, and images. The data were subsequently validated through source triangulation by comparing data from multiple sources and confirming it through interviews with directly involved participants—additionally, atlas.TI was utilized in this investigation to facilitate data analysis.

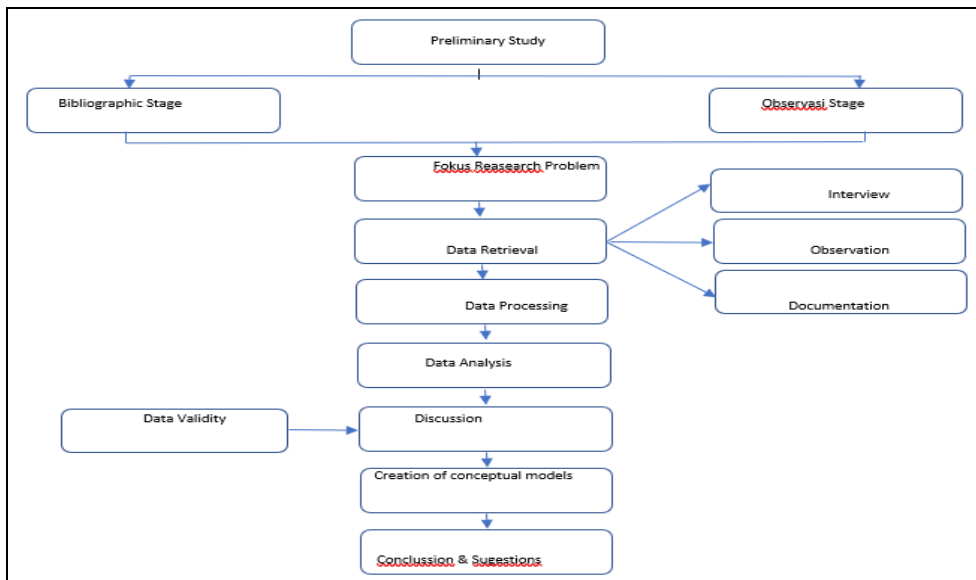


Figure 1. Research method of the research

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data presented were those obtained based on the results of in-depth interviews with the Principal, Vice Principal for Public Relations, Vice Principal for Curriculum, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, Vice Principal for Al-Islam, Muhammadiyah, and Arabic (ISMUBA), and Vice Principal for Infrastructure. Conceptual skills began with the principal's ability to formulate the school's vision, mission, and goals. Conceptual skills are the principal's skills in making concepts, analyzing problems, coordinating, and combining all organizational activities. The principal's conceptual skills have been applied to the principal's ability to understand educational needs and problems. This will enable the school to realize its vision, mission, and objectives.

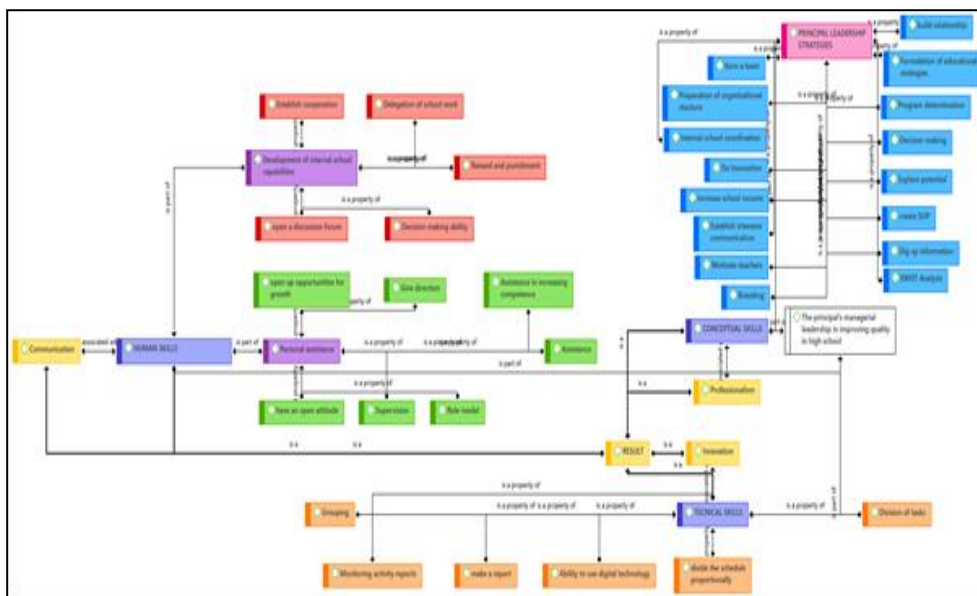


Figure 2. Mind Map Of Principal's Managerial Leadership in Improving School Quality in Senior High Schools

Aside from conceptual skills in the principal's managerial leadership, a principal must also have human skills. Human skills are defined as knowledge of human behavior and interpersonal processes, the ability to understand the feelings, attitudes, and motives of others from what they say and do, the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively, and the ability to build cooperative relationships and encourage others to work voluntarily. These human relationship skills are manifested in their ability to build communication patterns, coordinate in implementing their programs, supervise the performance of teachers and employees, and provide motivation or encouragement to teachers and employees.

Additionally, the principal is a school leader who has the authority to distribute tasks to teachers and all employees at the school. Technical skills are also needed to support the principal's managerial leadership in improving quality and conceptual and human skills. Technical skills are knowledge of methods, processes, procedures, and techniques for correctly carrying out an organization's management activities. Technical skills are related to how to manage an organization. In this discussion, it means skills in managing schools. As a manager, the principal must master technical skills to manage his school well. One of the ways to master these technical skills is by being able to know the abilities of each teacher before giving assignments to the teacher. These technical skills are also related to the digitalization of the principal and all Senior high school (SMA) Muhammadiyah 5 Yogyakarta teachers. The principal must

ensure that all teachers can operate computers properly with these technical skills.

### **Principal Conceptual Skills**

Based on the researchers' research results, the principal's conceptual skills in improving quality were first formulated by formulating a clear vision, mission, and objectives. The vision, mission, and objectives were made as the school's desires or ideals for the future. The principal's conceptual skills in improving the school's quality were generally shown by the consistency and commitment of the principal to the vision, mission, and goals. Evidence of consistency and commitment from the principal was displayed when the formulation of programs remained guided by the school's vision, mission, and goals. Although the vision, mission, and goals are not made not entirely by the principal, every year, the principal always holds a discussion forum or deliberation related to the vision, mission, and goals of the school, discussing whether any of the three need to be changed or added to make them more perfect. However, until now, the principal has felt that the vision, mission, and goals, as well as the programs in the school, have been relevant and practical to be implemented at SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Yogyakarta. The principal has also been active in motivating teachers to improve their performance, where the principal often provides training/workshops, brings in speakers, and includes teachers in training activities. In addition, the principal has also been quite concerned about the welfare of teachers, such as salaries, and increasing knowledge and faith, such as bringing in ustadz/ustadzah in joint religious study activities. The principal provides good access and support for teachers who wish to continue their studies to a higher level. Conceptual ability is the ability to see the organization as a whole, which is related to the ability to see the fundamental role of the organization in the overall development situation, understand the functions between one organization and another, see changes that occur in parts that affect each other (Fikri, 2024).

A principal who is always committed to the vision, mission, and objectives manifests the principal's seriousness in realizing school programs. The program was divided into short-term, medium-term, and long-term programs. A principal also has a vital role in school development programs. Hopkins (1996) argues that the role of teachers is vital in education, and they are responsible for the quality of education. Therefore, teachers must continue to develop and improve the abilities and quality of the schools they lead. Conceptual means focusing on knowledge and services to all parties who need educational services (Rupnidah & Eliza, 2022). A school will achieve its goals if it can carry out good management, such as coordinating, providing work direction, organizing, and providing supervision, all of which are carried out by

the principal (Nurhayati et al., 2022). In developing school programs, the role of the principal is significant. The success or failure of a school development program is primarily determined by the conceptual skills possessed by the principal. Conceptual skills are related to the ability to analyze a problem. Conceptual skills are also abilities that the principal must possess in creating concepts related to the educational process so that these concepts can support the performance of all personnel in the school.

### **Principal's Human Skills**

Human skills are knowledge of human behavior and interpersonal processes, the ability to understand the feelings, attitudes, and motives of others from what they say and do, the ability to communicate clearly and persuasively, and the ability to build cooperative relationships and encourage others to work voluntarily. These human skills are manifested in the principal's ability to build communication patterns, coordinate in implementing his/her programs, supervise the performance of teachers and employees, and provide motivation or encouragement to teachers and employees. According to Kaso et al., (2021), the principal's leadership includes several aspects, such as communication, motivation, leadership skills, decision-making, and positive power, to produce quality aspects. In these human skills, the principal is expected to have a development and mentoring strategy for his/her staff.

A principal is very likely to realize superior school quality both in terms of academics and even in terms of non-academics, where the principal must have a strategy of approaches in human relations, can empower all members to work together as a team, be trustworthy, and have the ability in various information (Margana et al., 2019). Human skills are also knowledge about human behavior and the process of interpersonal relationships, the ability to understand the feelings, behaviors, and motivations of others towards what they do, the ability to communicate with humans, the ability to convince others, proficiency in speaking, and acceptable social behavior (Friedman, 2020)(Khumalo, 2021). In this case, the principal has held an annual program to improve the abilities of all teachers and staff, academically and non-academically. In addition, the principal has also tried to bring in experts or speakers at certain moments to increase motivation and knowledge. For training, the principal has also optimized so that everyone can participate, both in and outside the school environment.

### **Principal's Technic Skills**

The technical skills of the principal in improving quality were generally shown by the principal's ability to understand his teachers. The principal has attempted to understand every competency and experience his teachers possess.

It was proven that the principal has also distributed main or additional tasks to each teacher according to their respective portions and competencies. In general, the principal of SMA Muhammadiyah 5 Yogyakarta has been very good at distributing tasks to his personnel, such as main tasks, additional tasks, or extracurricular tasks. In addition, the principal has also ensured that all teachers in the school are equally proficient in IT, especially in operating computers. In some instances, the principal also often held joint training in IT to improve the ability to operate computers, particularly in using new programs or applications related to teaching and learning activities at school. The principal has also been active in making reports on each program that has been implemented; by the habits carried out by the principal, namely by forming a team, reports could be worked on together, assisted explicitly by the Vice Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure. The principal always involved the vice principal or teachers in activities and needs at school.

In improving school quality, the principal's technical skills are exhibited by how the principal understands the teacher's abilities before assigning tasks to each teacher. Technical skills are defined as knowledge of methods, processes, procedures, and techniques to carry out management activities of an organization correctly. Technical skills are also related to the way an organization is managed. (Burak & Özüdoğru, 2023) they stated that it is a human ability to use procedures, techniques, and knowledge. Leaders or principals responsible for personnel work require a deep understanding of the techniques and equipment used by their subordinates when carrying out their duties. As managers, principals must master technical skills to manage their schools well. One of the ways to master these technical skills is to know the abilities of each teacher before giving assignments to the teacher.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on this study's research results and discussion, the researchers concluded that the principal should apply managerial skills to improve school quality. In improving the quality in general, the human skills of the principal were exhibited in the principal's communication regarding the program to be implemented. The principal always held discussions with the vice principal and all teachers at the school, where, in general, the principal has been very good at building communication with all school residents. Moreover, most teachers are still young, and almost all are the same age, so they can be more accessible and in line with building good communication. In forming a communication pattern, the principal not only does it when in a discussion forum but also often communicates with individuals, both in the school environment and outside of school. This is a reasonably effective strategy for building teamwork at school.



Moreover, the principal provides a habit for each teacher to motivate and help each other so that each teacher has enthusiasm and is motivated, thus improving the quality of the school.■

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